

# COBBETT'S WEEKLY REGISTER.

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"This Bill (Mr. Peel's) was grounded on concurrent Reports of both Houses; it was passed by unanimous votes of both Houses; it was, at the close of the Session, a subject of high eulogium in the Speaker's Speech to the Regent, and in the Regent's Speech to the two Houses: now, then, I, William Cobbett, assert, that, to carry this Bill into effect is impossible; and I say, that, if this Bill be carried into full effect, I will give Castlereagh leave to lay me on a Gridiron and broil me alive, while Sidmouth may stir the coals, and Canning stand by and laugh at my groans."—Taken from Cobbett's Register, written at North Hampstead, Long Island, on the 24th of September, 1819, and published in England in November, 1819.

## MR. WODEHOUSE.

On his censure on Mr. Cobbett.—

On the starving Irish.—On Castlereagh's projects of 29th April; and especially on the project for repealing Peel's Bill, or Legal-Tender project.

Kensington, 1 May 1822.

SIR,

It has long been the practice of those in parliament to censure,

by name, any one out of parliament that they may choose to censure; and, therefore, I am by no means disposed to complain of your conduct upon this occasion; though, as you will presently see, it suits me to say something about that conduct. I have no particular reason for addressing to you my remarks on the other topics at the head of this Letter. Your name will serve to distinguish this Letter from others; and, I want a

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*name for it, as it will contain matter to be frequently referred to hereafter. I take your name now as I did that of Tierney in 1818. The letter of 11th July, 1818, which contained the warning as to the consequences of Peel's Bill, is now called "Letter to Tierney" (I wish you would read it); and this letter, which will contain a new prophecy, will, in a year's time or so, be referred to under the name of "Letter to Wodehouse." The legal-tender project, broached by Castlereagh on the 29th of April, is, as I will show you, a repeal of Peel's Bill to a certain extent; but I mean to show you, that that is only a beginning in the way of repeal; and, as here will be a prophesying again, your name to the Letter will be handy, because, most assuredly, this is the only Letter I shall ever address to you.*

*I shall first notice your censure on me; not that it gives me offence, for the feeling it excites, after what I heard when in Norfolk, really is that of compassion. I can make allowances, and large allowances too, for persons in your situation. But, it is the question: it is the great question from which my name is become inseparable: that question and my name are going all over the*

*world together: mention has been made of me in parliament: therefore I must take care to put the matter straight. People, in you, hear a Member of Parliament: in me, they hear William Cobbett.*

The grounds on which you thought proper to introduce my name are very curious. Mr. COKE, your colleague, in presenting a petition from a district in Norfolk, stated, that the petitioners had wished to have an open and public meeting; but that the magistrates of the district (two Parsons) to whom they applied according to Six-Acts, refused to sanction such meeting. It was strange enough, that you could not defend the conduct of these magistrates without putting forth *censure on me!* I shall insert here the report, from the *Morning Chronicle*, of what was said, as to this point, by YOU, by Mr. DENISON, and by Mr. BENNET.

MR. WODEHOUSE.—He (Mr. Coke) had alluded to the refusal of the magistrates to call the meeting of the Hundred. He (Mr. W.) had a conversation with one of those magistrates on the subject. He would not say whether the reason for refusing the Meeting was good or not, but certainly such language had been used at public meetings, he would not say in Norfolk, but other counties, that it was no wonder magistrates were reluctant to

sanction such Meetings. He was now bound to explain himself: when the Meeting was called for Norfolk, it was in that wretched state, that two persons were executed, and about one hundred in prison; and the unfortunate men, upon going out of the world, stated, that their only object in violating the laws was to frighten the farmers to increase their allowance. What then must be the effect of such language as was used in other counties? He alluded particularly to that of Surrey, where a Noble Lord, he would not hesitate to name him—Lord King—had held forth in terms of unqualified panegyric respecting Mr. Cobbett; (*hear, hear!*) that speech was reprinted and circulated through the county of Norfolk, and they had more of Mr. Cobbett's company that year than before, and it was a place that suited him best, as there was more distress there than in any other. He was surprised at the respect which the Noble Lord expressed for that man who, he ought to know, had no regard for the rights of property. He was sorry that he had expressed such an opinion—it was unwise towards the country, unkind towards the people, and unworthy of the high station which he held (*loud cries of hear, hear! from the Ministerial benches*).

Mr. DENISON.—With regard to the allusions made to a Noble Lord, he (Mr. D.) could take it upon himself to give all the facts charged the flattest contradiction.—(*Hear.*) He was near Lord King at the Surrey Meeting, and he knew that the Noble Lord did not pass an unqualified panegyric upon Mr. Cobbett. His words were, “that he had now in his eye “a public writer, to whom, whatever gentlemen might think of “his opinion, the country was “greatly indebted for the clear “manner in which he delivered “his sentiments, and that in his “opinion he was generally right.”

—(*Hear.*) And it really was his (Mr. D.'s) own opinion, that whatever might be said of Mr. Cobbett, his predictions in most instances were verified; for was it not a fact that the country was now reduced to that state, that it was impossible for the Noble Lord over the way to collect the taxes under present circumstances and with the present currency?—(*Hear.*)

Mr. BENNET said, that he also felt himself called upon to speak in defence of a Noble Lord, who had been alluded to. Having been present at the meeting, he was thus enabled to speak from personal observation of the part which Lord King took upon that occasion. It was true the Noble Lord did eulogise Mr. Cobbett, but in so doing he was, in his (Mr. B.'s) opinion, perfectly right; and he (Mr. B.) would have done the same under similar circumstances. Lord King spoke of Mr. Cobbett as an able public writer—who could deny it? who could say that he was not a most able and intelligent writer, and that his opinions in the main were not correct?—(*Hear.*)—Mr. Cobbett was, in truth, a writer, to whose literary labour the country was much indebted, for he set things in a proper view; and, in fact, all that credit which was given many public men, who had gained a reputation by acting upon his suggestions, was attributable to him alone. In speaking then of such a man, why should not Lord King be at liberty to say what his opinion of him was? Was not the opinion of Lord King quite as valuable as that of the Honourable Member (Mr. Wodehouse,) and as likely to be correctly formed?

Mr. WODEHOUSE, in explanation, observed, that he was still borne out in what he had said of Lord King praising Mr. Cobbett. He had a note of the Noble Lord's words, which were these: “He is

"the most able writer of this or any other times."—(Loud cheers from the Opposition.)—He had never said more than that the Noble Lord eulogised Mr. Cobbett. With regard to this individual having been much in the county of Norfolk of late, he was proceeding to state—

The SPEAKER here interfered, and observed that the petition having been brought up, there was then no question before the house, and to proceed in the debate was irregular. The Right Honourable Gentleman then put the question "that it do lie upon the table;" upon which—

Mr. WODEHOUSE resumed. He had been stating that recently Mr. Cobbett was very much in Norfolk; and to that he should add, that *his efforts there were all turned to encourage the growth of discontent and disaffection.* Upon more occasions than one he had declared "that the *farmers were all brutes.*"—(A laugh)—that there was nothing shabby that they would not do; and that in fine, they were *starving their labourers, and doing every thing disgraceful to human nature.*—Could any one see such a man held up as an object of admiration by a Peer of the Realm without fear? The Hon. Member had attacked him (Mr. W.) for attacking Lord King, but was not his character of the Noble Lord warranted by his speeches in the House of Lords?—(Cries of Order.) He could assure Gentlemen he had no disposition to pursue the subject, and he adverted to it a second time, not with a view to vilify Lord King, but to state that he was not in a humour to retract one word of what he had said.

Mr. MABERLY observed that the best reason to suppose that Lord King had formed a right estimate of Mr. Cobbett was, that

*his sentiments were approved of by the Meeting he was addressing.* It would be well if certain Gentlemen could submit their opinions to such a test as the voice of the people, and come off harmless.—(Hear.)

Now, Sir, first of all, Mr. DENISON was wrong. There were no *qualifications* in Lord KING's speech. He was speaking of the errors of Webb Hall; and he observed, that, if any one had not the time to bestow on his evidence, it would be sufficient to read what had been said on the subject "by one of the most able and enter-taining writers of the present or any other day." That was *all.* That was every word. And this is what has been swelled up by you into a lofty panegyric! I had never even *seen* Lord King before; though his lordship could not have failed to recollect, that when the base and foolish paper faction, raised a popular cry against him in 1812, because he would not receive his rents in a paper which they have now acknowledged to have been depreciated at the time; he could not have failed to recollect, that, at that time, I was not so much the enemy of "*the rights of property,*" as not to disdain popular clamour when it was my duty to defend his lordship's rights.

But, suppose Lord King had uttered an unqualified panegyric



on me; suppose he had said, that I was the most able of all political writers; suppose he had held me up as an object of admiration (oh! "*shocking!*") ; what had this to do with the conduct of the two *Parson-Magistrates*? what justification did this form for them? why, the praises of Lord King on me had been *printed and circulated in Norfolk*. And what then? They had not been printed and circulated by me. But, *what then?* The parson-magistrates might very well be "*shocked*" at the praises; but, what had they to do with the intended meeting? Did the *shocked* parson-magistrates expect Lord King, or me, or both, at the meeting? What *reason*, then, was this for the conduct of the fire-shovel-hat magistrates?

But, I have been more in Norfolk of *late* than *formerly*. Why, I never was in Norfolk but three times, making 18 days altogether; and never before last *September*. But, have I not as much right in Norfolk as you have? Some years back, you would, perhaps, have thought of "*interfering*" as the Manchester Magistrates did, when I was about to pass through that town. Those days of "*prosperity*" are, thank God, passed never to return, be you well assured! And,

pray, upon what do you found your assertion, that I have "no regard to the *rights of property*?" I think I understand those rights full as well as you do; and, I think, if you had *read* instead of abused, you would, long ago, have discovered, that I would, if I could have had my will, have *preserved property*, and not suffered it to be taken away, as it now is, by *leger-demain*. Landlords would have had property still, if they had followed my advice; and, having rejected it, they are in a fair way of having none. Do you allude to my opinions as to the *game*? I have the authority of Blackstone for that, and of every man that ever wrote on the law of nature and of nations. If, however, you think so much of the hares and partridges and so little of the land on which they live, the Jews will, I dare say, have no objection to your exclusive enjoyment of the former.

But, what do you mean by *property*? It must certainly be *game* and *boroughs* that you have in your eye; for, do you imagine that I have *nothing*, then, but the clothes on my back? I believe I have, though just beginning the world afresh, *as much property as you*. I think my copyrights *equal in value to your estate*; and that,

if I were never to write another word, they would yield a *larger rent*. Not than your estate *now* yields; for, to talk of *that* would be a cruel mockery; but, larger than it *ever yielded*. You "Country-Gentlemen," as you are called, or, rather, as you call yourselves, seem to look upon all the rest of us as a parcel of *runnagates* that have neither house nor home. Just as if my property is not as good as yours. Just as if that which is of my *own creation* is not as much *property* as your land is, whatever you may happen to have of it; and just as if my right to be in Norfolk is not as good as yours is, ever was, or ever will be.

The truth is, that I have been thought, and by no bad judges, to adhere too much to the interest of what you call *property*; to uphold the landowners *more* than I ought to have done; to give them an unjust preference. At any rate, if the sots be ruined, they cannot say that the fault is mine, seeing that, from first to last, I have opposed every measure that has had a tendency to produce that ruin. If my advice had been followed, the "*property*," as you call it, would not have been in its present state. If I had been sitting in the *seat*

that you have filled so long, the present miserable state of things *could not have existed*. I say distinctly, and I am sure the country will echo the opinion, that, if I had filled the seat that you fill, the present state of things *could not have existed*. And, if you were now to consult even *your own interest*, you would beg the parsons and others of Norfolk to elect me in your place! Those are not the wisest owners of ships and coaches, who take the helm and reins into their own hands!

But, Norfolk, you say, "suited *me best* because there was *more distress* there than in any *other county*." Neither is true; but, suppose it had been so? If I thought it most likely to produce impression on men in *distress*, what was there *wrong* in that? There remained to be settled, the question, whether the impression that I sought to make was *good* or *bad*; and, it was your business to show, that it was *bad*; a thing which you did not attempt to do. The impression that I sought to produce in the minds of the farmers was this: that prices would *not get up*; that they would be ruined if they proceeded upon *any such calculation*; that, if they had families, it was their duty not to give their

last shilling to the landlord and parson; that the poor-rate arose from the taxes; that it became all of us, who happened to be better off than labourers, to make their case our own, and to be considerate towards them. This was the doctrine I preached in Norfolk; and, though my hearers were mostly farmers, I never omitted the latter. I did, indeed, never omit *parliamentary reform*, and who can omit it that really wishes to see things put to rights? And, as for my own *private interest*, how can I, in this conduct, have consulted *that*? For, how is it *possible* for any state of things to be so *profitable* to me as the present, when every day is fulfilling some prediction of mine, and making, of course, an addition to that, which, in the eyes of most men, would be more valuable than all other things put together?

What Mr. BENNET said was strictly true. It was no more than what all his hearers knew indeed; but, the occasion having called for it, it was *just* to say it; because, I, as well as Lord King, was *not present* to answer for myself; and, further, because there were no means possessed by me of making my answer co-extensive in its circulation with your attack. What

Mr. BENNET said was also right in another respect. There is no credit to be derived from the studious and constant endeavour to suppress the fact, that, upon this subject of the nation's distresses I have, all along been *right*, and, until now, been *alone*. Much greater credit is to be gained by the acknowledgment of the fact; for, while it is much too notorious to be hidden from the nation, the nation is just enough to applaud the candour of those who acknowledge it. The "*Higher Orders*" do not perceive how narrowly they are *watched* as to this matter. It is so *dead a set*; so complete a *pitting* of me against the "*education of the country*;" that every motion of both is most attentively observed; and, strange as it may seem to you, Mr. Wodehouse, and to the Magistrate-Parsons of Norfolk, every inch I gain upon the "*education*" draws forth shouts of joy from hundreds of thousands. Do you think, that the *people* do not see *clean through* the poor attempt that the "*Education*" is making in the project upon which I am presently to remark? They know as well as Castlereagh himself what it is that makes him repeal Peel's Bill *by degrees*. And what is their feeling on this account: what

can it be other than that of *inexpressible contempt*?

Before I proceed to examine this project of *Legal-tender*, I shall, agreeably to the title of my letter, notice the case of the *Starving Irish*. Mr. GOOCH says, that reform would not put a *sixpence into the farmer's pockets*. Perhaps he will say, that it would not put a mouthful into the heads of these starving people. But, he will, I suppose, allow, that it could not do them *any harm*! Will he allow, that these people are not likely to *change for the worse*? Because, if he will but allow that, we have an argument in favour of reform. I shall take the words of Sir E. O'BRIEN, as contained in the report of the *Morning Chronicle*. The truth of them was *not denied*; nor was it even doubted. Take the picture, and say whether it was ever exceeded by any instance of national misery in any age or under any government.

Sir E. O'BRIEN proceeded to address the House, amidst loud cries of "Go on, go on!" He wished to point out to the Gentlemen around him, the very dreadful and calamitous situation to which a great portion of his countrymen were reduced. There were at this moment thousands of persons in Ireland, who, in consequence of the failure of the late *potatoe crop*, were reduced to a single meal a day,

and that meal generally consisted of oatmeal and water (hear, hear!). It was known that, generally speaking, the whole population of the South of Ireland lived during a great portion of the year upon potatoes; but, during the last year, the incessant rains which prevailed, had totally decayed and destroyed that vegetable in the ground. At the late assizes in his (Sir E. O'Brien's) County, the distressed state of the people was taken into consideration, and a representation of that distress was made to his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. He had no doubt of the *kind and benevolent intentions* of the Noble Lord, who now filled the office of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; but it was impossible to extend relief to that poor and suffering country, without the interference and aid of Parliament (hear, hear!). It was a lamentable fact, that at this moment the counties of Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Mayo, and Roscommon, in fact, the whole provinces of Munster and Connaught, were in a state of actual starvation (hear, hear!). If the counties of Lancaster, or Warwick, or Stafford, were distressed and suffering as Ireland now is, what, he would ask, would be the feelings of that House? What would be the effect produced upon the agricultural interests of the country? What were the people of that unfortunate and distressed country to do? How were they, deprived as they were of money, of any resource, to relieve themselves from the difficulties under which they laboured? He well remembered the situation in which Ireland was placed in 1817. Great as the distresses of the country were at that period, there was still a *circulation of money*, and a high price of corn, which afforded many openings of relief. But what was the situation of the country now? There was scarcely a town in the south of Ireland, in which hundreds of strong, able bodied men, were



not to be seen walking about without any means of getting employment. (hear, hear!) The question for the consideration of the House was—"What produced this state of things?" *One-third of the respectable people of the county of Clare had been reduced to absolute distress; they had neither money nor means to relieve themselves.* He was aware that there was plenty of corn in the market; but what did that do towards relief, when the distressed parties had no money to buy? It was true that the gentry of the county were, in many instances, ready to co-operate with the magistrates in affording relief—but what then? How was it possible for a few individuals to afford permanent relief to 100,000 or 150,000 men? (hear, hear!). In making this statement, he did not appear before the House as a mendicant on the part of his country (hear, hear!). All he asked was, that Government would make advances to relieve the present distresses of unfortunate Ireland. For these advances the county rates should be pledged, and the money might be laid out in repairing roads, or in such other manner as might be deemed best calculated to afford general relief. The case which he advocated was not an idle one. It was well known to many of his friends, that *thousands were at this moment dying from famine in Ireland.* He was most anxious to make this statement at the earliest period, with a view to draw the attention of Government to it, for unless relief was promptly afforded, the unfortunate population must suffer the last stage of misery. In proof of this he begged that gentlemen would consider the present, as compared with the former prices of food in that country. A short time ago, potatoes, the principal food of the peasantry of Ireland, were sold at from one penny to three halfpence per stone; during this year they were sold at sixpence halfpenny per stone (hear!). While

this general article of Irish consumption was so raised, oatmeal was also raised much in value. It had, in fact, risen from 13l. to 15l. per ton (hear!). The Hon. Bart. after pointing out with great clearness and effect the other distresses under which the people of Ireland laboured, as well as the causes which produced these distresses, adverted to the fact of the poor people in Ireland being actually obliged to rob for their support. He had himself been informed by the head police officer in his county, that if they were to commit all the persons who took provisions for their support, no gaol in the country could hold them; nay, farther, that the parties so arrested, if they could get their families around them, would think that they had made a happy exchange in getting into prison (hear, hear!). The Honourable Baronet concluded by expressing a hope that Parliament would take into its serious consideration the distressed and suffering state of Ireland.

There are not many "surrounding rations" that will "envy" us this, I think, Mr. Wodehouse! This is taking place, too, at a time, when the nation is plunged into "distress" by "over-production!" Well; now let us see, then, what is to be the remedy. Those Ministers that you support have a remedy for this. They have a project for affording "relief." It is this, Lord Castlereagh says: *two millions of money are to be voted, one to send food to the sufferers, and one to set them to work on public works!* Bravo! This last is agreeable to the real hole-digging principle! Public

*Works!* The farmers cannot afford to pay the labourers to work for *their benefit*; but, they are to afford to pay taxes to pay the labourers for working on public works! Well, Sir; I give you joy of the Ministers you support! I give you joy of these famous projects.

Here we have, in this memorable night, two projects broached; one, to lay out a million of taxes to take corn into *pawn*, in order to prevent *a further fall in the price*, the price being already so low from *over-production*: another to lay out another million of taxes in *food* to be sent to a part of the people who are *starving*! There! match that, reformed parliament, whenever you may come! Match that! These are projects coming from the "*mind*" of the nation; from "*the education of the country*," and not from the "*basest populace*." The latter would never have been able to discover projects like these. Look at Ireland, Mr. Wodehouse. Look at it as painted by the loyal Mr. O'BRIEN; and then tell us, whether you think, that we *Jacobins* should have managed things any great deal more ably. Any fool can reduce a people to starvation in times of *scarcity*; but it requires, it seems, the "*Education of the*

*Country*" to bring them into this state in a season of *over-production*!

It does not appear to have occurred to Mr. O'BRIEN, that this starvation may possibly have been occasioned by *the taxes*! Oh, dear, no! For Castlereagh, as cool as a cucumber, says, on this very occasion, that, if *all* the taxes were taken off, it would afford no relief whatever! This Mr. O'BRIEN says, that there is plenty of corn in the market; but that there is *no money to buy it with*. There is money to buy corn for the soldiers sailors, placemen, pensioners and fundholders; but there is no money to buy corn for these starving labouring people, *who have raised the corn*! That is very odd, is it not, Mr. O'BRIEN? The oddest thing in the world, that those who do the work should have no money to buy corn with; and that those who do not do any work should have money to buy corn with. And where do the soldiers and placemen and fundholders get the money that they have to buy corn with? Do they not get it from those that work and raise the corn? And if they did not get it from them, would not those who work and raise the corn have money to buy corn with? And yet a whole crowd of people sit in silence

while they are unblushingly told that taxes have not a tendency to produce distress in those who pay them!

Mr. O'BRIEN did not touch upon matter like this. He did not say a word about stopping the operations of the taxgatherer and the tithe-factor. He wanted *relief from the parliament*. He wanted food to be sent to the starving creatures; and this was right enough; but where and when and how is this to end? Not a word about *mismanagement*. Not a word about any reform in the governing of Ireland. The wretched farmers themselves are broken up. The food of their very cattle is taken away and they are dying, and yet, not a single word about a change in the mode of managing the affairs of the country!

The subject of taxation not being the cause of distress was introduced upon this occasion by CASTLEREAGH in rather a new sort of way. He *congratulated the House* upon its having rejected the *wild notion* that taxes had an effect in producing distress. He said that he had maintained this opinion upon a former occasion. "And, in support of that opinion, " he had since received the sanction and confirmation of the

" *highest authority*, upon such subjects, and, in naming the " Hon. Member for Portarlington (Mr. Ricardo), he felt he " was alluding to a person whose " opinions *must necessarily have* " *a great weight with the Committee.*" Why, yes. He and the member for Portarlington are certainly much about upon a level in many respects. The latter has very lately said that he regarded the country as being *in a most prosperous state*; and, to be sure, if this be not prosperity that we are in now, we must be a people very difficult to please! Nevertheless, to such a state are the landlords reduced, that they have no means of making a stand against any thing that may be attempted. They are absolutely so sunk as hardly to dare to open their mouths; or, they never would endure this. I now come to the main topic of my letter; namely the *Legal-tender* project; or, in other words, the project for gently and indirectly repealing Peel's Bill. The Pawning project I shall pass over, and also that for *funding the half-pay and pensions of the army and navy*! A thing to laugh at for a year; a thing full of all that is ridiculous; a thing perfectly *farcical*; but a thing unworthy

of much time bestowed on it, when we have before us the grand project for making a beginning in the repeal of Peel's Bill. I shall take the whole of the passage from Castlereagh's Speech on this subject; and the equal of it was, surely, never seen or heard of before. It is a matter of vast importance. It requires to be fully examined and developed, that the public may see every part of the scheme in its true light. I shall first insert the passage, and then endeavour to give the several parts such an arrangement as shall divest the thing of the *botheration* in which it is enveloped.

Before, however, I put this mass of stuff upon paper, let me state to you, Sir, at this moment, the Bank of England notes are a *legal tender*; that is to say, if a debtor have a mind to pay in Bank of England notes, you have no way of *forcing* him to pay in gold or silver. Country Bankers are not compelled to pay their own notes in gold or silver; but may tender you Bank of England notes, and if you refuse to receive them, they can set you at defiance. This is "*pretty cash-payments*," to be sure; but, by Peel's Bill, the whole of this *legal tender* is

to cease *next May*; that is to say, this very day twelve months!

That is one thing which you have to bear in mind. Now for another thing. Before PITT and his privy council authorised the Bank to refuse to pay its notes in 1797, there was an act of parliament in force, which prevented the issuing of any promissory notes or Bills of Exchange *under the sum of five pounds*. This act was, of course, suspended when the Bank stoppage took place; but since that, in order to come back to the "*ancient standard of value*," at which Lord GRENVILLE and Mr. TIERNEY were in such haste to arrive, an act was passed to forbid Country Bankers to issue any notes under five pounds, after May 1825; that is to say, after three years from this day.

Keeping these things in mind, pray read with attention the pretty little piece of *botheration* that I am now about to lay before you from the speech of our great political philosopher.

"The house was probably aware that the act of Parliament by which private banks were allowed to issue notes under the value of 5*l.* would expire in the year 1825. All transactions for a smaller amount must afterwards, in that case, be carried on in a metallic currency. (Hear, hear.) Now the period



when this would occur was so near at hand, that it behoved Parliament, without further loss of time, to come to some resolution on the subject. Either it should make up its mind to extend the duration of the act, or give some distinct notice that the law would inevitably be permitted to take its course. It was true that private banks, which had their own small notes in public circulation, were already preparing to meet the necessity which would arise, if the act were suffered to expire. One of the results of this preparation was, that they did not act up to the scale of their own credit, and that the pressure on the general circulation was augmented. Should Parliament be of opinion that the best course of policy would be to substitute a metallic currency, still ample notice ought to be given; and it should be distinctly understood that no delay would take place. Great efforts might become necessary to meet the ensuing period, as the effect of such a decision might be to place the circulation of Europe, as well as of this country, on a metallic basis. (Hear, hear, hear.)—The time now fixed was rapidly approaching, and they ought not to hesitate longer on the proceeding which might be most judiciously adopted. In the present state of things he should now state to the house, that his Majesty's ministers, after the fullest deliberation, had considered it most expedient and prudent to submit, that the act in question should be prolonged for several years, or, in other words, that its duration should be made co-extensive with the charter of the Bank of England. (Hear, hear.) That charter will not expire till the year 1833. If the country was now actually suffering from the effects of measures, which were only essential in order to accomplish the moral object of returning to our ancient standard, it was of the greatest importance not to render that inconvenience and suffering

yet more severe by needlessly withdrawing the smaller notes from circulation. (Loud cries of "hear, hear.") He could scarcely conceive that any advantage would attend a considerable increase of the gold currency, for the experience of the Bank proved that it was against the taste of the public, and that if issued in large quantities, it returned upon the Bank, and was gladly exchanged for paper. It was hardly necessary for him to observe, that if the plan of which he was endeavouring to trace an outline should be adopted, Parliament would of course provide amongst other regulations, that no private bank which paid its own notes in those of the Bank of England should be liable to insolvency. His right hon. friend (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) would shortly bring forward a measure, for the purpose of guarding against any abuse under this head; and undoubtedly it would be a point gained, if unexceptionable security could be combined with an increased facility of banking. True it was, as had been justly remarked by an hon. gent. opposite on a late occasion, that property could not be rendered uniformly secure; but that some improvement in the system upon which our banking establishments were conducted was obvious. With a view to this improvement, a negotiation had been opened between Government and the Bank. The object of it was to induce the latter to consent to a relaxation of its charter so far as to permit firms, consisting of more than six partners, to commence business as bankers, provided it was not within the sphere of its monopoly, or the distance of sixty-five miles from London. With this proviso, full liberty would be given to the formation of joint stock banking companies all over England. In calling their attention to the banks in Scotland, he might remark that there were 23 with charters, besides others, consisting in some instances

of from 50 to 60 partners. Yet so *sound and salutary were the principles on which the banking system was conducted*, that in a country where the people were not apt to expose their property to too great hazard, they had never shewn themselves averse to *deposit their money with these establishments*, and had always felt themselves secure against illicit speculation. Something beneficial there must be in a system which had *passed through a tempest like that which had raged for a long period*, and outlived all those tremendous shocks which property had been compelled to encounter. Whilst in England, banks had been falling in various districts at succeeding periods, not one example of the kind had occurred in Scotland, or but one of which he had recently heard, and which he was not sure had actually taken place."

Here we have the beginning of the great work. Here we have a new scheme of Banks and Banking. Here all is to be paper again. That "*ancient standard of our ancestors*," of which the Speaker spoke in so lofty a style to the Regent; that "*healthy currency*;" that "*moral symbol*;" that precious thing which was agreed to amidst the unanimous cheers of both houses; this which was to immortalize the parliament that enacted it, vanishes like a shadow, and forth comes a whole tribe of chartered Banks; country rags are rendered perpetual; and legal tender is to supply the place of "*healthy currency*" and "*moral symbol*."

I shall follow the order in which I find these bare-faced assertions; this worse than burlesque statement and exhibition, as nearly as I can. In the first place, May 1825 is not so *very near at hand*! Why should parliament be in such a hurry? Why should it make any declaration at all? The act is passed, and that is enough. There is an act of parliament, which is to have effect in three years from this time, and for what reason is the parliament to *do any thing at all* about the matter? The parliament is now called upon to *make up its mind*. Why it did make up its mind. It passed the act; and what is it to give any *notice* about the matter for? This is like asking a girl to make up her mind after she is wedded and before she is bedded.

Come, come; no tricks; no shuffling! It was intended that the Bill should go into effect. It was intended that the small notes should cease. It was intended, in short, to return to cash-payments in reality; but the thing has been found *impossible*. "Should parliament be of opinion that the *best course of policy* would be to *substitute a metallic currency*." What the devil is this? Should parliament

(after passing Peel's Bill, mind,) be of *opinion* that the best *course of policy* would be to *substitute a metallic currency!* Of *opinion!* Why they have *enacted*, have they not? Have they not enacted that they will return to a metallic currency? a "healthy currency;" a "moral symbol." And do we now hear it put as a matter of *doubt*, whether parliament will be of *opinion* that this will be the best *course of policy*?

However, we are soon to discover what is meant by all this; for we are told, that, should parliament be of *opinion* (after passing Peel's Bill, mind again,) should parliament be of *opinion*, that it is the best course of policy to pay in cash, "*great efforts might become necessary.*" What! Great efforts necessary? What to do? Why, to "meet the ensuing period." What period? Why all this fuss about country one pound notes? Why all this *alarm* lest the country ragmen should be compelled to pay in gold? I thought that this was the thing that was wanted. Here was an act passed to give it us; and yet now great efforts may be wanted! And why these great efforts? This is the reason, and pray attend to it; not you Mr. WODEHOUSE, but you, farmers,

who heard my rustic harangues at *Battle*, at *Huntingdon*, and at *Lynn*. Pray listen, while this great political philosopher tells you the cause of these "*great efforts*" that will be wanted.

Great efforts, he says, may become necessary to meet the ensuing period; because, (and now mind) the "effect of such a "*decision*, might be to place the "*circulation of Europe*, as well "as of this country, on a *metallic basis.*" Oh! monstrous! So, then, after all; after Peel's Bill; after the bragging speech of the speaker; after the endless high sounding stuff about the *ancient standard* of our *ancestors*; after *healthy currency* and *moral symbol*; after all the boasting of having *got rid* of the paper; after all the abuse of Lord GRENVILLE upon the "*paper bubble,*" we are told that *great efforts* will be necessary, *if we decide* upon placing our currency on a *metallic basis!*

But, "*decide!*" What does the man mean by *deciding*? Was not the thing decided; was it not resolved unanimously by both houses; was it not *enacted* in Peel's Bill; does the thing not make an act of parliament; and does not Peel's Bill say this: "Whereas it is expedient that a

“definite period should be fixed  
 “for the termination of such re-  
 “strictions, and that measures  
 “should be taken to *ensure*, on  
 “the arrival of that period, the  
 “payment of the promissory notes  
 “of the Bank of England in the  
 “legal coin of the realm, Be it,  
 “therefore, enacted, and so forth?”

And is it, after this, that we hear this man talk about whether it should be the *opinion* of parliament; and about some *decision* to be had relative to a metallic basis for our currency? This is pretty stuff, indeed! But, what I wish my hearers at Battle at Huntingdon and at Lynn to attend to, is this. They will recollect that I endeavoured to convince them, *that prices must come down* a great deal lower than they were. My argument was this. When the period arrives, at which the country Bank notes shall be *payable in gold on demand*, those notes must disappear and leave nothing in their stead; or *gold must come from abroad* to supply their place. This will *lower prices abroad*; and our prices must keep following those prices, till they come very nearly to a level with them; because, the currency of this country being the same as the currency of France, it will be impossible that our prices of

produce should long continue much above theirs.

On this I founded my opinion, that if Peel's Bill went into *full effect*, our wheat, upon an average of years, would be even *less than four shillings a bushel*. The pretty gentlemen at Whitehall seem, at last, to have had a little of this light penetrate into their skulls; for here we find our great political philosopher observing that to do away our small country rags would be placing the *currency of Europe*, as well as of this country, on a *metallic basis*. It is monstrous, to be sure, to find our pretty gentlemen *alarmed* at this; but, it is clear that they have made the discovery; and, as we are now about to see, they have taken a pretty firm resolution, that *our currency, at any rate, shall have a basis of paper and not a basis of metal!* Their measures (measures which they are actually going to propose observe) for effecting this purpose, are two-fold, or, rather three-fold. First, to repeal the Bill that would put a stop to the small notes of country Bankers. This they intend to do immediately; in order that the country Bankers may be under no *apprehensions* as to the effect of the Act of which we have been speaking; and that they



may continue to pour forth their rags with their usual "*liberality*." No doubt they will be liberal enough, if any one will give them any thing for their rags.

But, it is the next measure that is the grand stroke, and that will actually be a repeal of Peel's Bill in part; namely, to make Bank of England notes continue to be, after May 1823, a *legal tender in exchange for the country rags as they are at this day!* This is the stroke! This is intended to *keep the gold from circulating about the country, just as it now is kept.* But only mind the *pretences* here. If, says our great political philosopher, the country is now suffering from the effects of measures (Peel's Bill) "*which were only 'essential in order to accomplish the 'moral object' of returning 'to our 'ancient standard,' it 'was of the greatest importance 'not to make that suffering more 'severe by 'needlessly withdrawing the small notes from 'circulation.'*"

What must this man *think of his hearers!* "*The moral object!*" What can he mean by this jargon? What! was it a mere paying for a week or a year, then? Was it to be a mere *matter of form*, as a man suffers a cane to be drawn across his shoulders?

Or, as the copyholder surrenders his land to the lord of the manor by presenting a little twig! Was it to be a thing of this sort? And was this to be all! Was this to satisfy *Lord Grenville?* Oh, monstrous! Any thing so barefaced never was heard of before. But, in this hour of trepidation, and of confusion of ideas, what will not pass! "*Loud cries of hear, hear!*" when he said, that the *small notes were to be kept in circulation!* Aye, and from that very same Assembly, who, with unanimous voice, had passed Peel's Bill, which "*set the question at rest for ever,*" which delivered the country from the "*paper-bubble,*" and which gave us the "*ancient standard of our ancestors!*"

We have next two sentences the equal of which are not to be found in any speech that ever fell from the lips of mortal man: First we are told, that the people *do not like gold;* and, then, immediately afterwards, that it will be *necessary to guard against their demands for it.* "He could scarcely conceive that any advantage would attend a considerable increase of the gold currency; for the Bank had proved that it *was against the taste of the public;* and that, if issued, it was returned, and

"*gladly exchanged for paper.*" Very well, then. A little gold will do. There need be no fear of paying in cash; for the people have *no taste for gold*. Now, mark the *sincerity* of this assertion. "Parliament would, of course, provide, that no private bank which paid its own notes in those of the bank of England, should be liable to insolvency"! Why, provide for this? Why compel the people to take paper, if they have *no taste for gold*? What *needless* work such a provision of parliament must be! What! the people do *not like gold*; and yet you will pass a law to *compel them to take paper*; and that, too, for "the moral object" of returning to the "ancient standard of our ancestors"!

This *exposes* the whole thing. This lets all out. This tells us, at once, what is meant; namely, that we are to have a currency in which the Bank of England paper is to be a *legal tender*. We are to have a system which shall *force* a paper-money on the country; and that this is to be the permanent system. That this is a repeal of Peel's Bill in part is as clear as day-light; for, how stands the case? According to Peel's Bill all *legal-tender* ceases on the 1st of May, 1823. As we now, at *this time*, stand, there is a *legal tender*. Any man may pay in Bank of England notes, if he choose, and may refuse other payment. But, the main thing is this. The Country Ragmen can *refuse you gold for their notes*. They do this now all over the country; and, in Scotland, they will not exchange their own notes in gold even at a *discount* on their own notes! This is the cause why the gold

does not get about the country. The people *want* it. They would not keep the rags in their tills and drawers for an hour. But, they cannot get the gold. The Ragmen take special care to be supplied with the Mother Bank Notes; and those the people in the country do not like so well as the Country-Rags, because so liable to forgery. Thus the Rags are kept out, and the gold coin is confined pretty much to London and its vicinity, where there are no country-rags.

This is the state of things *now*; but, let Peel's Bill go into full effect; let *legal tender be put an end to*; let the Ragman be *compelled* to give *gold*, and not Mother Bank notes in exchange for his rags; let the country people be able to go to him next May, with Peel's Bill, in their hand, and say, "give me a *sovereign* for this rag;" let that happy day come, and then we see gold all over the country, and wheat, on an average of years, at *four shillings a bushel*, or, perhaps, at *three shillings*!

This is what I have been telling the money-hoarders for a long time. Ah! but, this "happy day" is not to arrive! Castle-reagh is coming with his measure to be submitted to the "*wisdom of parliament*," and it is *now* to *decide*, whether or not it be the best "*course of policy* to establish a *metallic basis*!" In short, a *law* is now to be proposed to enable country-bankers to *refuse to pay in gold* after May 1823, and until May 1833! Make it *for ever*! None of your haggling about it. It is eternity. Never shall we see cash-payments as long as the borough-system lasts. Here is, however, a clear, a defi-

nite, an effectual repeal of Peel's Bill, as to a very essential part of it. That Bill cannot now (when this law shall be passed) go into *full effect*. Thus will my Long Island prophecy be fulfilled; and thus will the Gridiron become my *symbol*, my *sign*, and my *crest*. The very next day after the passing of the bill, up goes a gridiron, six feet and a half across, on the Office of the Register, No. 183, Fleet-street; and there it remains, till the borough-bank-notes shall be no more!

However, this *legal-tender work* is not all the work that will be done. *More* will be done, during even this session I imagine; but I am sure more will be done long before *this day twelve months*. The repeal of that part of Peel's Bill which relates to *legal tender* will prevent the gold from getting about the country, as the legal-tender law *now does*. It will prevent prices from falling *lower*, on an average of seasons, than their present mark; but it will do little more. It will prevent us from drawing *our proper share of gold from abroad*; and will thereby prevent a further fall of prices abroad; but it will not tend to *raise prices or lighten the burden* of taxation here. The fundholder will not get *more* than he now gets; but this scheme will not take any of his present gains from him. All that this legal-tender scheme will do, therefore, is, to prevent the landlord from being ruined *faster* than he now is.

To make *prices rise*, by means of currency-measures, there must be a *further* repeal of Peel's Bill. There must be a change in the

price at which the borough-bank is to issue *bars*; and she must be "restrained" from issuing *coin* altogether. This would be the Devil to be sure; but, when once a *beginning* has been made, the thing may go on glibly enough. When once the Gridiron is hoisted in Fleet-street, there will not be much more of shame to swallow. Let them take one gulp, and down the dose will go to the bottom of their bowels.

Perhaps this session may pass over without any further repeal than this relating to the legal-tender. The landlords and parsons want all the paper back; but, in order to spare the feelings of their friends, they may be coaxed into a little delay, it being *understood* that the floodgates are to be opened *next year*! Besides, there is my *prophecy*! Oh! to see that accomplished! To hear that accomplishment noised about all over the world! Now, confess, Mr. Wodehouse, that this is no small matter; and that you really would *pinch* a little rather than have to live under this triumph, this signal, this boundless, triumph of mine! If it was so "*shocking*" to you to hear a word of commendation on me at a county-meeting in Surrey, what must it be to hear more, and much more, than half the nation, shouting out my triumph over the collective and unanimous wisdom!

Yet, the dose, the bitter dose, *must be swallowed*. One of two things must come, a *reduction of the interest of the Debt*, or a return to the "*paper-bubble*" whole and complete and co-existent with the borough-system. A reduction of the interest of the Debt, or a currency of *pure paper*, totally

unrestrained by coin or by bars. One or the other will and must take place; and, from the speech of our great political philosopher, the latter appears to be resolved on; for here we have a project for establishing paper-mills and bank-note presses all over the country, *under the controul of the Government!* That is to say, a set of new banks, to have *larger quantities of notes than the present banks.* A new system of banking. A parcel of *chartered* banks. And this, too, just towards the *close of the period*, when the "ancient standard of our ancestors" was to be restored in all its solidity and all its purity! These banks will open, I dare say, with great eclat. There will be such speculating, such rivalry, such jobbing, and such a bragging about the resources and funds of the parties. In short, a new banking madness will rage throughout the land. The description given of the scheme is sufficiently amusing: "True it was," our great Castlereagh said, "as had been justly remarked by an Hon. Gent. opposite on a late occasion, that property could not be rendered *uniformly secure*, but that *some improvement* in the system upon which our banking establishments were conducted was obvious. With a view to this *improvement*, a negociation had been opened between Government and the Bank. The object of it was to induce the latter to consent to a relaxation of its charter so far as to *permit firms, consisting of more than six partners*, to commence business as bankers, provided it was not within the sphere of its monopoly, or the distance of 65

"miles from London. With this proviso, full liberty would be given to the formation of *joint-stock banking companies all over England.*"

This is a likely way to "*return to cash-payments!*" It is so *probable*, that, if *cash*, were really intended to be the currency, this scheme would be resorted to. The hope is, that, by establishing these *chartered* banks, the government will be able to wheedle the people into a disregard for gold. But, if it were to succeed in this, it could not wheedle the Jews into a disregard for what they could get by fetching bars out of the Bank, if they could get only the price of an orange by one of those bars. After all, therefore, the scheme is perfectly idiotic, it is perfectly beastly, as to any object of *relief* to the landlords, unless the ultimate object be a return, not to the "ancient standard of our ancestors," but to the paper-bubble of Pitt in all its plentitude.

And this, I take it, will be the case. We may probably pass over the present session with nothing more being done than the passing of the *everlasting legal tender*. But, I think, that the next session will open with the *new-bank plan*. That will, I dare say, be represented as a *very different thing* from the banking that existed in 1819. The paper of the new banks will be described as *solidity* itself; and, I shall not be surprised to hear the present bank notes called *filthy rags*. There will be no occasion for a Peel's Bill when the paper is so *solid*; when it is, in *fact*, so much better than gold, and when the use of it saves the *expense* of so costly a standard as that of gold and silver.



We shall never hear the word *Assignats* pronounced for fear of giving rise to unpleasant feelings; but, assignats this paper will be, the moment the Bank shall be protected against paying on demand, in gold at 77s. 10½d. an ounce.

The present scheme is, amongst other things, intended to *prevent the carrying of Mr. Western's motion*, which, I verily believe, would have been carried, had not this proposition come out in time. This may *pacify* the rentless landlords a little. They, be it observed, care less about "*Cobbett's prophecies*" than the pretty gentlemen do. They *hate me*, but they *want rents*; and to tell them, that they will fulfil my prophecies if they insist upon rents, is not quite enough to reduce them to absolute silence. The pretty gentlemen have, I dare say, tried this as far as it would go. "Only think," says HUMB-BUG to SIR NINNY NUMSKULL, "only think, my dear SIR NINNY, what a thing it would be *for us* to call for the repeal of this *Bill!*"

SIR N. Aye, MR. HUMB-BUG, but think a little of my poor tenants.

HUM. It is very true, SIR NINNY; but, really farmers have been *too high* of late years; and I can see no harm in —

SIR N. Very true, very true, very true, as you say: no harm in *their* coming down a little; but —

HUM. Yes, I understand you: you cannot endure the idea of seeing their wives and families in a state of such anxiety; but, really, SIR NINNY, you must not

suffer your humanity to get so far the better of your —

SIR N. Very true; but, when one feels —

HUM. Aye; there is the fault of you country-gentlemen. You *feel so much!* Your feelings are so fine, touched, as we know they are, by the cries even of a *hare*; that, really, SIR NINNY, it is difficult to get your nerves up to that degree of stiffness, which ought to characterise "the *education* of the country" in pursuing the "stern path of duty."

SIR N. But, as I was going to say before, when one feels —

HUM. And as I must say again, SIR NINNY, though I beg pardon for interrupting you, you feel too much. You ought not to feel so acutely. Our humanity is to be subject to our wisdom as well as the most unruly and mischievous of our passions; and —

SIR N. But, I say, Sir, when one feels —

HUM. But you must not feel for the losses and what you call the *distress* of —

SIR N. But, d—— it, when one feels *one's own distress!*

HUM. Oh! I beg pardon. That is a very different matter.

SIR N. What the Devil did you think I meant?

HUM. Indeed I beg pardon. Your distress is, indeed, a very different matter. But, SIR NINNY, be assured it is *temporary*. It arises merely from a "sudden transition from war to peace."

SIR N. The transition is, I think, MR. HUMB-BUG, pretty long going on.

HUM. Oh, no! my dear Sir.

Only think of the long and extraordinary contest, that we carried on "for the salvation of Europe and the world;" and of the time that it takes "for capital "to find its way into new channels."

SIR N. I know nothing about that; but I know, that, since this Peel's Bill has been passed, I have got *no rents*.

HUM. Distrain, distrain!

SIR N. I have! And now I have got the rates, tithes and taxes to pay out of money that I borrow on mortgage; and thus my estate ———

HUM. Upon my honour, SIR NINNY, you look on the matter in a wrong light.

SIR N. Why look you here, Mr. HUMBUG; I am as loyal a man as any in the kingdom and have always supported his Majesty's government; but, I do think, that they should do something for us; that they should give us a good price by repealing this Peel's Bill.

HUM. But, my dear SIR NINNY, only think of the triumph that that would give to that "seditious and blasphemous" Cobbett!

SIR N. D—— the fellow! I don't like him any better than you do. I wish the devil had him. I wish he had rotted in Newgate, or had been drowned at sea. I'd think no more of hanging him than I would of hanging a poacher.

HUM. Well, then, my dear SIR NINNY, pray think of what a thing it would be to place before the whole nation, and I may say, the whole world, a fact to prove, that that fellow, being, too, in a sort of exile, into which the stern-

path system had driven him, and sitting in his shirt and trowsers in a paper tent in Long Island, knew more about the greatest of all the affairs of this great nation than his Majesty's Government and both Houses of the Collective Wisdom of the ———

SIR N. Oh!

HUMBUG. Nay; this is not all; for, with the reputation for knowledge and sagacity, which this triumph would give him, he would have thousands upon thousands flock to that standard of rebellion, which he calls *Reform*; the ———

SIR N. What! (*Starting up*)

HUMBUG. The torrent would become too strong to be resisted; a reform must take place; and ——— need I say more?

SIR N. What! my borough! my seat!

HUM. God forbid, my dear SIR NINNY! God forbid I should live to see "the *education* of the country" compelled to give way to the "*basest populace*." God forbid I should live to see the "*national mind*," the "*wisdom* of parliament," the "*uncompromising spirit*," which has sustained the "*national faith*," and has "accomplished the salvation of the country, of Europe and the world," while it has placed the "credit of this *great nation* on an indisputable basis," and has "spread *happiness* and *content* throughout the dwellings of the immense population of this *mighty empire*;" God forbid, my dear SIR NINNY, that I should live to see "this stupendous fabric of human wisdom; this matchless constitution which has conducted us in safety through so many perils; this

"envy of surrounding nations; "this admiration of the world;" God forbid, that I should live to see this "light of the universe," emanating, as it does, from the country-gentlemen of England, extinguished by "a low, degraded crew of reformers."

SIR N. Yes, Mr. Humbug, God forbid, indeed! 'Twould be a shocking thing: a very shocking thing; and so the Rev. Dr. FIRE-SHOVEL was saying last night to Lady Numpskull and myself. But, Mr. Humbug, don't you think that this Peel's Bill helps these same reformers by "*throwing*," as a noble Lord observed the other day, "*the farmers into the general mass of disaffection?*"

HUMBUG. Why, Sir Ninny, that noble Lord has singular ideas; and, as he objects to the farmers being *thrown* into the general mass of disaffection, it would be but civil in him to point out how they are to be *thrown* in any other direction.

SIR N. Gad I can tell you.

HUM. How?

SIR N. Why, give them *high prices again*.

HUM. This is not to be done, Sir Ninny, by any Act of the Legislature. It must be left to time; and, in time, "*things will find their level*."

SIR N. Level, indeed, Sir! We shall all be *on a level* in the country pretty soon, I believe; for none of us will have any property left.

HUM. Pray, my dear Sir Ninny, have a little patience. The "*healing hand of time*" will——

SIR N. We have been told that for these seven years.

HUM. But, "*the general work-*

*ing of events*" cannot fail to——

SIR N. I do not think so, Mr. Humbug; and I am quite satisfied, that this Peel's Bill will be the ruin of us all. And Cobbett may be the Devil if you will; he has proved this to me at any rate.

HUM. What! Sir Ninny; do you read Cobbett? I hope not!

(*Enter Fire-Shovel and Lady Numpskull.*)

FIRE-SHOVEL. Amen! I hope not indeed.

LADY N. For shame, my dear!

FIRE-SHOVEL. Oh, fie! Fie upon you, Sir Ninny.

SIR N. Why, I saw a Number one day by accident.

LADY N. By *accident* indeed! I'm ashamed of you, my dear.

FIRE-SHOVEL. Shame, shame, Sir Ninny! Hazard your precious and immortal soul by reading that wretched and diabolical and damnable villain's "*sedition and blasphemous*" writings!

HUMBUG. (*aside.*) I leave him in good hands.—*Exit.*

LADY N. There! You see Mr. Humbug's *gone*; and I wanted to ask him for the place of distributor of stamps for my son.

FIRE-SHOVEL. (*aside.*) Which may be just as good for *my son*. I'll follow him. *Exit.*

SIR N. You have asked him often enough already in vain.

LADY N. Yes; and so I may, as long as you read Cobbett.

We should certainly come to a quarrel, and, therefore, I put an end to the dialogue; and to this Letter at the same time, being well convinced, that, what I have here given in the way of supposition, is little, if any thing, short of the reality, in scores, if not hundreds of instances. I am quite satisfied, that, had it not been for

the dread of exposure from me, and of my triumph, Peel's Bill would have been repealed during the last session of Parliament; and these, I am as well satisfied, are the *only obstacles* in the way of the repeal now.

In conclusion, let me quote a prophecy about the *fate* of this bill, in a letter to the Regent, written in Long Island on the 5th September 1819, published in London on the 30th October 1819, and now re-published. "Of all the wild schemes that ever issued from the heads of weak and obstinate men, this (Peel's Bill) is the wildest, this is the most visionary; and the *fate* of it will be something like this: after having caused unspeakable misery amongst the poorer classes; after having crushed a great part of the middle classes; after having driven away to foreign lands a considerable portion of the real resources of the country; after having brought the nation to the eve of some terrible convulsion: after all this, it will be abandoned; and never will an expectation of seeing cash-payments again exist in any mind except that of a born idiot. This result can be prevented only by a *previous convulsion*."

There, Sir, that is what I said of this measure, while you, in England, were tossing up your caps and shouting triumph at having adopted it. Does not this prove, that I am as fit as you are to give the people of Norfolk advice? Does it not form some justification for LORD KING and MR. BENNET and MR. DENISON in bestowing that praise, which gave you so much offence, and which is

as it ought to be, very grateful to me? But, it was not *this or that* part of my writings on these subjects: it was the *general tenour* of them, which showed, in few words this: that, if my principles had been adopted, and my advice followed, the country never would have known any thing of those calamities that have now been brought upon it, or any thing of those difficulties and dangers, at the sight of which the Government now stands aghast. You, Sir, and all belonging to you, have been from first to last, supporters of that system, which I have been as constantly opposing. The fruits of that horrible system are now before us; and, is it not a little too much to hear *you*, at this time, representing *me* as a mischief-doer to the country? Only an ordinary degree of modesty would, one would have thought, be sufficient to repress the spirit of reproach in you, at any rate. Instead of preferring accusations against me, you ought to seek indulgence from me, and be happy if you obtain it. Sack-cloth and ashes now become those who have been the satellites of Pitt and his successors. They have *ruined their country*; but their habitual flippant audacity still characterises every word that drops from their lips. "*Disaffection*" indeed! Harping still upon this old despicable string. The Borough-Bank Stoppage Act; the Eight hundred millions of Debt; the Barracks and thundering Army; Peel's Bill: these are the things that work, that embarrass, that torment, the nation; these produce the distress in England and the starvation in Ireland. These, the works of the Pitt faction; these



are "disaffection;" and the man who talks of any other disaffection, is that which I do not, in the present case, choose to describe.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient  
And most humble Servant,  
WM. COBBETT.

## PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT.

(From the Statesman, Thursday.)

WE have often observed, that, in proportion to the smallness of the number of our "*Representatives*" present, the matter that transpires is important. Last night there was some talk which, on more accounts than one, we think of great interest; and shall, therefore, offer some remarks on it to our readers.—The topics were, *Parliamentary Reform*; *Mr. Ricardo's Doctrines*; *Repeal of Taxes*; and the famous *Pension funding Project*.

That of *Reform* was brought forward by Mr. JAMES, member for Carlisle, in presenting a petition from a body of the inhabitants of that city. Mr. JAMES insisted, as he truly might, that all the distresses of the country, all its calamities and dangers, arose from the want of a due representation of the people in that House. He declared his conviction, that it was necessary that the reform should extend to *Universal Suffrage*; and, this he placed on the best possible ground; namely, that "as every man was liable to be called upon to *risk his life in the defence of property*, it was just that he should have a right to vote in the appointment of those who framed laws affecting property and life." They

laughed, it seems, on the Treasury Benches, when Mr. JAMES made a declaration in favour of *Universal Suffrage*! They will not laugh by-and-by! They will not laugh, when there remain neither *rents* nor *tithes*; and, mind, to preserve *either* of these, there must be some measures of a *decided assignat* character, unless there be a reform of the Parliament, for, reduce *establishments much*, and reduce *debt at all*, they cannot without a *reform*! The landlords and parsons have, therefore, to choose out of these three: *Reform*; *Assignats*; or *loss of rents and tithes*; and we would defy the Devil himself, if he were Premier, to prevent *one of the three*. We would recommend the first; but, really, it is much more, now, the affair of the landlords and parsons than it is that of any body else.—We cannot quit this topic, without just noticing the *high authority*, that that greater spouter CANNING, quoted the other night against the breaking up of rotten boroughs. He made a monstrous show of it. He said he would not tell who the authority was till he stated the doctrine; and, after a long preparation of this sort, out it came: "no other; no less an authority," said he, "than JUNIUS himself."—What an empty; what a contemptible piece of bombast! To quote an anonymous scribbler; as corrupt a knave, perhaps, as ever sacked public money; a writer, who to be damned instantly only needed to have given his name; a hooker-together of antithesises; the writer of a long book without any one sound principle, except by accident; and without as much useful knowledge in the whole book as is equal in amount

to what any ploughboy can give you respecting the best mode of killing rats and mice. A writer that never was praised by any man of sense except from mere fashion and from carelessness; a writer that owes his reputation to the sort of mystery that hangs about the book: a foundation for reputation just as good as that of the ghost of Cock-lane, and not one whit better. The matter of the book is bad; the style affected and every way vicious. There is nothing in the book that enlightens the mind or warms the heart. Strings of coolly framed sentences; and, which is a great vice with us, antitheses without end; and in general, without point. This book has been praised by that *quoter* of men calling themselves the *learned*; men who solemnly decided that the writings of WILLIAM IRELAND could have come from no other pen than that of SHAKESPEARE. A book, in short, containing nothing but impertinent malignity; and praised by nobody but solemn fools. And this is the *great authority* that our nabob in the shell holds up to us as a sufficient answer to the petitions of millions of the people! We are not, I take it, to be answered in this way; and if Mr. CANNING does not discover this before he gets to India, he will very soon afterwards.

Mr. RICARDO's *doctrines*.—Mr. JAMES took occasion to observe, that these doctrines had proved to be wholly false; and he said,\* if

\* Mr. JAMES presented a petition from the merchants, traders, manufacturers, and other inhabitants of the city of Carlisle, complaining of the great pressure of distress arising from the immense weight of taxation. This they attributed in

Mr. RICARDO would but read a *little pamphlet or two* of Mr. COBBETT, he would find, that *he knew nothing at all of the matter*; and,

an eminent degree to the defective state of the representation in that house, and in this feeling he fully concurred with his constituents. The petitioners believed that a vast majority of that House were returned by far less than the thousandth part of the male adult population of the kingdom. Under such circumstances, there could be no community of thought, no sympathy, no kindred feeling, between the great bulk of the people and those who sat in that house to represent them. The people saw that the grossest acts of tyranny and injustice had arisen from this defective system. They saw the act of 1819 for preventing meetings of the people—that in the same year the perpetrators of a barbarous outrage on the people assembled at Manchester had been suffered to escape with impunity, and that question to pass without investigation. His constituents, as he had observed, attributed a great portion of their burdens to the excessive pressure of taxation, and in this he fully concurred with them. Some of the evils were also to be set down to the account of the recent alteration in the currency. His honourable friend the member for Portarlington (Mr. Ricardo), in speaking on this subject, had said that the change in the currency had made a reduction in prices to the amount of ten per cent; and on another occasion he had observed that there was not a difference of 3 per cent. between gold and paper. Now these were opinions inconsistent with each other, as they were, in his opinion, all inconsistent with the fact. If the Hon. Member (Mr. Ricardo) would but take the trouble of reading two or three small works written by Mr. Cobbett on this subject (laughter), and which he might obtain at a very

he added, as an inducement for Mr. RICARDO to enter on this course of instruction, that the pamphlets were *extraordinarily*

*cheap* rate (continued laughter), they would convince him *that he knew nothing at all about the matter.* (Loud and continued laughter from all sides.) The Hon. Member (Mr. Ricardo) had also said, that the prices depended on the supply and demand; but if he had read Cobbett (laughter), he would have found that the prices also depended upon the quantity of the circulating medium in the market (hear, hear); and that when the circulation was much limited, the result would be to double the weight of taxation. Well, but could this alteration in the currency be repealed? He feared not. It appeared that branch banks were to be established in the country, for the purpose of issuing country notes. This was trifling; for if convertible into Bank of England notes, and those notes into gold, the thing would be of no avail. The noble lord opposite (Lord Londonderry) would find himself very much mistaken, if he thought that he could remedy the misgovernment of half a century, by turning bonded wheat into flour, and issuing pawnbrokers' tickets to bankrupts and beggars. As to relief from the salt-tax, it alone would be nothing; *for he was convinced that no reduction short of 30,000,000*l.* or 25,000,000*l.* of taxes at least, would be effectual for the relief of the country.* (Laughter.) He was glad in this opinion to have the concurrence of the Honourable Member for Reading (Mr. Monck). The honourable gentleman then proceeded to state, that nothing but entire and effectual reform could produce immediate good to the country, or be any security for its better government in future. The reform which he should wish to see accomplished would be that which would give a vote to every member in

*cheap.* The Honourable Collective Wisdom appear to have *laughed* very heartily at this; a laugh not altogether unequivocal. Some we are sure laughed at "*the Oracle*": but the greater part, perhaps, were in the mood of *Sir Fretful Plagiary*, in the Critic, when he joins in the horse-laugh, but shows, all the while, that he is most cursedly mortified. Referring our readers to the Speech of Mr. JAMES, we will now take notice of what Mr. RICARDO appears to have said in his *defence*. Mr. JAMES had said that Mr. RICARDO had at one time asserted that PEEL'S Bill would have the effect of reducing prices only *three* per cent. and that since he had acknowledged that it had reduced prices *ten* per cent. The defendant did not *deny*; nor did he attempt to say that Mr. COBBETT had not refuted all his doctrines. But he appears simply to have said—"I ask the Hon. Gentleman *when* it was that I "talked of this three and this ten "per cent.?" Now, let us observe that this was by no means that species of defence which we should have expected from an oracle. Oracles are famous for being bold; and, never attempt (that we have heard of) the Quaker-like tactics of answering one question by another. Mr. JAMES does not, doubtless, carry the Parliamentary debates about in his pocket; and might very well have replied to Mr. RICARDO by asking him what he would think of a lady, who, in answer to a

society. He was, in short, for *universal suffrage*. It was his conscientious opinion that every man should have a vote, as every man was *alike liable to be called upon in defence of his country.*

charge of a nature too indelicate to be named when we have any so pure as the Honourable House before us, what he would think of the lady, who, in her defence should say, "Tell me the hour and the spot!" What, in such a case as this would it be to the party accusing, whether the fragrant clover or the nodding corn had been the sufferer? And what is it to this humbugged nation whether the oracle uttered its gusts on the Monday or the Friday; whether it held the Saturday or the Sunday sacred, whereon to cease from its labours? What is it to this deluded nation whether these erroneous doctrines were uttered six weeks sooner or six weeks later? We have not the precise dates before us at this moment; but we venture to state (and we will give the detail tomorrow) that Mr. RICARDO has asserted, that PEEL'S Bill could not raise the value of money compared with that of produce more than, in the first place 5 or 6 per cent.; in the next place 4½ per cent.; at one time (but we forget precisely the order) not more than 3 per cent., and, lastly, not more than 10 per cent. To ask Mr. JAMES questions, therefore, as to the *when*, was giving him no answer at all. The charge of that gentleman was perfectly well founded; nor was it by any means uncalled for; because, upon these very doctrines of Mr. RICARDO, this terrible Bill of PEEL was founded; and upon these very doctrines it is, that it is now contended, the *taking off of taxes will not relieve the distresses of the country*. It was necessary therefore, for Mr. JAMES, if he meant to speak sense, and

to cause sense to prevail amongst others, to attack these delusive and humbugging doctrines; proceeding, as Mr. JAMES truly observed, from Mr. RICARDO'S *complete ignorance of the whole matter*. To prove this complete ignorance, there were not two or three of Mr. COBBETT'S pamphlets necessary. It did not need the "*Long Island Prophecies*;" nor did it need any thing but the first of the three letters which were addressed to Lord LIVERPOOL a few weeks ago; which were first published in this Paper, and afterwards published in the *Register* of 9th March. In that letter it was proved to the satisfaction of every man of sense, not that Mr. RICARDO'S doctrines were false in degree; not that that gentleman had fallen into an error of calculation or computation; not that there was an error in the *figures*; but that there was an error in the mind; and that the basis of the opinion was a perfect vision; a thing having no more to do with the matter than the crows that make their nests in the elm-trees at the foot of the monument have to do with the supporting of that monument. This is what that letter shows. As Mr. JAMES said, it is very cheap. It costs only sixpence; and if a man will be a fool all his life rather than expend what a Jew-boy gains by the sale of eighteen-penny-worth of oranges, he merits to be laughed at, to be sure; only, it is pretty serious work when his folly is to cause the ruin and the starvation of no inconsiderable part of the people of a great country.

REDUCING TAXES.—There seems to be a great strife between



the leather-tax and the salt-tax, which (or one of which) will doubtless be taken off in consequence of the *funding* of the pensions and half-pay. Whatever tax be taken off, it ought to be *wholly* taken off; for if any part remain, all the taxgatherers remain; and all the frauds, perjuries, rascalities, and expenses of the tax still remain. It is more advantageous to a country to take off the whole of a tax to the amount of a million, than a part of a tax to the amount of a million and a half. In selecting taxes to be taken off, the most expensive in the collection; the most odious in themselves; the most teasing and tantalising; the most degrading and insulting should be fixed on. There is quite enough of all these qualities belonging to the salt-tax; but, besides this, it has two characteristics, which render it peculiarly detestable. The first of these is, that it is of the nature of a *poll-tax*. Salt, is perfectly a necessary of life.—It is not like beer, wine, spirits, tobacco, pepper, almost any thing else that is taxed. It is not even like soap and candles. Means may be found to do with a very small portion of these. But we must have salt; and the labourer must have as much of it as the Lord. It is, as we said before, of the nature of a poll-tax, and, where was there a poll-tax ever heard of in the world without exciting feelings hostile to the Government?—The other peculiarity of the salt-tax is, that it intercepts a real gift of God. It is a thing not created by the labour of man. It is a pure gift of nature. The various uses of Salt in Agriculture are

very well known. In America they salt their hay as they put it in the stack. They give their horses, sheep and cattle of all descriptions salt; and they make use of it in the creating of manure; though they have first carried it across the sea, and that, too, from this very island; whose government interposes between God and the people here, and whose unwise laws do, in fact, say to the people, "For the sake of our getting a million and a half from you we will do you an injury to the amount of many millions." We know very well that it is said, and we know the fact to be so, indeed, that the Government, in order to obviate this injury, will permit salt to be used, tax free, for certain purposes of agricultural manufacture. But, look at all the endless vexations necessary to be endured by individuals in order to avail themselves of this exception! In short, and this the Government knows very well, these exceptions, though undoubtedly well meant, operate in favour of, and are made use of by, none but great manufacturers; and that many of them make use of it for the villanous purpose of robbing the rest of the community, by the means of the bribery and other artifices that they employ. It is perfectly unbearable; the very thought is enough to drive people to madness, that we should be obliged to pay *twenty shillings* for a certain parcel of that very matter which nature casts upon our own shores, and that that same parcel of matter, shall be first bought here, put on board of ship, carried to America, and sold out of the shop there for *less than half-a-*

*crown!* It was the salt-tax that, more than any other thing, produced the French revolution. The recollection of it produced more bitterness, and more vindictive acts than any other of the oppressions of the French people. It is a thing that touches every creature. It is galling beyond description, and if the Government have one grain of sense left, they will cast the accursed thing from them, and have one claim, at least, to the thanks of the country. But if they take any, let them take off the whole of the tax; to take off a part, leaves all the odiousness of the tax, and, in fact, only tends to increase the irritation.

**FUNDING OF PENSIONS AND HALF-PAY.**—We explained this thing very fully yesterday. And should not have mentioned it now, had not Mr. BROUGHAM made what we deem a little too free with our property. We have a particular regard for the "rights of property," notwithstanding Mr. WODEHOUSE has chosen to assert the contrary of us. We mean, upon this occasion, to claim *our own*. We shall first give Mr. BROUGHAM's speech as we find it reported; and when we have done that, we shall put it to the candour of our readers, whether the learned gentleman have, or have not, made a little too free with our property upon this occasion.

"Mr. BROUGHAM entirely concurred in that suggestion, and begged to ask the Right Hon. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he would extend his plan to the *whole of the national debt?*—(Hear, hear)—Having taken one leaf out of the right honourable gentleman's book, the country could not do better than take another. And now it

occurred to him, there were many expenses of the Government to which so admirable a system might clearly be made applicable. There was the *civil list*—(Hear, hear); the *pension list*—(Hear, hear); those charges were annuities dependent upon lives. What could be better than to *farm the pensioners off at once?*—(Hear, and laughter).—Nay, ministers themselves might be provided for upon the same principle—(Hear, hear).—Their tenure of place was almost equal to tenure for life.—(Laughter).—Whatever might be the goodness of their holding, it seemed at least tolerably secure; and he (Mr. Brougham) doubted not to find contractors for the ministers as well as for the half-pay officers.—(Hear and laughter).—He really was bound to press the measure upon the consideration of the right hon. gentleman; a discovery so important ought not to be neglected. Nor were the powers of the measure confined even to the salaries of ministers; for the whole royal family might be *farmed out* in the same way, to the relief of the present generation (which much wanted such relief), and at the expense of a trifling burden only upon our happy posterity.—(Cheers and laughter.)"

Thus far Mr. BROUGHAM. Our readers will, we are sure, excuse us for producing proof that this property belongs to ourselves, and, to produce such proof, we have only to insert here a passage from our parliamentary commentary of yesterday.

"The measure is this: to *fund the pensions and the half-pay!* To get people to contract to pay them. To make them over to the contractors. To put them out on *farm*, as they do the poor of some parishes. In short, it is a *loan* that the Collective is about to make, to get money to pay the pensions and the half-pay with. This is the fact stark-naked: and there is no doubt of the plan

being carried into effect; for, it will cause some taxes to be taken off.— Suppose here to be an officer who has half-pay of 100*l.* a-year. It is for his life. The Government *contracts with me*, suppose, to pay this officer; and it pays me, not the 100*l.* a-year at first, but *less*; and, in time, it pays me more than 100*l.* a-year. So that, in the end I get by it; but, then, the Government has *less to pay for the present*; this is what CASTLEREAGH calls *dividing the burdens with posterity*! Posterity will not, we hope and believe, be fools enough to bear any portion of it. However, the thing is a loan; and the certificates for the officers and soldiers pay and pensions are the scrip! What next! What devil's tricks has the borough-system yet to play? Upon exactly the same ground the *King's allowance*, that of *his family*, all the *pensions and sinecures*, the *placemen and judges salaries* may be funded. PAINE said, that he should not wonder if PITT were, at last, to “*fund the Bank notes*,” and issue other paper as evidence of the Debt. There is no knowing, as we have often said, what shape the thing will assume at last. We have only to look at the history of the South Sea Bubble to be convinced that the powers of humbug are infinite. We should not at all wonder to see the *tithe funded*! Don't start parsons. Many things much more unlikely have taken place. A seizure of some sort or other must happen somewhere. To fund the tithes would be a great deal more natural thing than to fund the half-pay and pensions of officers and soldiers. A large sum of money advanced upon the tithes would “*divide the burthen with posterity*,” indeed. However, these hints will be sufficient. Our readers will see what a rich vein our noble political philosopher has struck upon here. This new funding-system may be carried to lengths of which few men are yet aware.”

We by no means find fault with Mr. BROUGHAM for availing himself of what he found here. There only wanted just a hint that he was indebted for it to an *Evening paper of that day*. There wanted no distinct acknowledgments, no expressions of gratitude, no praises, for fear Mr. WODEHOUSE should be at him; but just a hint that the thought had struck somebody before. The thought did not strike Mr. BROUGHAM when he was answering Lord CASTLEREAGH who broached the project; and, therefore, we say, in the most unqualified manner, that he owed the thought entirely to us, and that it was due to us, strictly speaking, that he should mention our paper by *name*, seeing that his speech was so very literal a copy of it. Perhaps, however, he thought that the House, the tasteful, the all-accomplished House, the at-once profound and sprightly House, to endeavour to bring which into contempt is to be punished with banishment for life; perhaps he thought that a body of persons of such elegant taste would not have been so entertained, and would not have bestowed on his wit so much cheering and so much laughter, if it had discovered, like the audience of the Spanish mountebank, mentioned in *Gil Blas*, that the squeak came from the knee of the cloak and did not originate with the operator himself.—We said yesterday that this new funding project would be received with great approbation; and, in a few hours after we wrote the words, the opinion was made good; for, whatever might be said about the ridiculousness of the thing (and a good deal was said;) whatever exposure might take

place as to the humbug of borrowing money to pay pensions and half-pay, in order to keep sacred the Sinking Fund; whatever might be said about this, and extremely well exposed it was by Mr. MABERLY; still all agreed to the project; seeing that the object was, in the humbug language of the day, *to throw the burden forward upon posterity*. God Almighty only knows what we are to see take place before this thing be over; but, at any rate, the main part of the weight will soon settle itself down safe upon the shoulders of the landlords and the parsons, and we will endeavour, if Mr. BROUGHAM will but promise to lend us his assistance, to keep the rest of the community in a fit of laughter from one end of a Session of Parliament to the other. Like pigeons, which the Yankees catch with large nets, these projects, the first having come down to us, will come tumbling one after another, till we shall find ourselves at last up to head and ears, and fairly smothered by the the subject of our sport. Readers! remember, that we now give it as our decided opinion, that the Ministers will at last propose, to *fund the funds!* We desire this prediction to be remembered; and if Mr. WODEHOUSE cannot see how the funds can be funded, we can.

## THE BUBBLE.

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At a Meeting of the Proprietors of Bank Stock, held May 2d, the substance of the late negotiation between the Bank and the Ministers came. The proposition of the Ministers had been, to extend the Charter of the Bank ten years *beyond the year 1833*, on condition that the Bank would give up *directly* that part of its charter which *prevents the establishment of other Banking Companies in England and Wales with more than six partners*. This was submitted to the present Meeting, by the Directors; and the Proprietors agreed to it. But, besides this, it was stated by the Directors, that the Bank was to have authority to *issue again* the ONE POUND NOTES, as before the passing of Peel's Bill! This clearly shows what are the *ultimate intentions* of both Bank and Ministry.